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TO

MR. RICHARD CARLILE.

SIR, Kensington, 27 January 1822.

You have publicly, and in a tone somewhat imperious, called upon me to state the *reasons*, on which I ground my dislike to *Republican Government*. I might as well call upon you (which I am by no means disposed to do) for the reasons on which you have grounded your change from the religion of Mr. Paine to that of M. Mirabeau; that is to say, from Deism to Atheism. It is matter of *taste*; and, when we are ourselves complaining of *persecution for opinions*, we should be careful how we attempt to controul the opinions of others.

I have merely stated my *opinion* of Republican government, as you have yours about what is to take place in the next world, and, surely, I am as likely to be well informed with regard to the former as you are with regard to the latter. However, if, in the absence of that elaborate confession of political faith, which you demand and against which I protest, a practical anecdote or two will afford you any satisfaction, here they are at your service. In the year 1819, a man was tried in NEW JERSEY, under the Act of King William III. for *impugning the Holy Trinity*, found guilty and punished by imprisonment, in the common jail. A few years before Mr. PAINE's death, a man *shot at him*, through the

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window of his own farm-house, as he was sitting by his fire-side, missed him, indeed, but sent the ball and slugs into a table, or some other thing, near him. The man, who had no hesitation in acknowledging and boasting of the deed, was held to bail, tried and acquitted amidst a cheering audience! Mr. PAINE tendered his vote at an election in the county where his farm lay. They would not let him vote. He brought his action against the parties, lost his cause, and had to pay costs! These, I take it, which are facts quite notorious, might suffice; but, I will just add, that the Republican, BINNS, who slipped his head out of the noose at Maidstone, leaving that of poor FATHER O'QUIGLEY in it, keeps a newspaper-office at Philadelphia, which was, in 1817 and 1818, also an office for openly trafficking in places under the government of Pennsylvania; that particular instances of this trafficking, with names, sums and all

the circumstances and proofs, were laid, in the form of petitions, before the Legislature; and that the Legislature *passed to the order of the day!* Not to tire you with a thousandth part of what you have so loudly called for, let me conclude with a caution that may be of real use. You talk about *this*, and *that*, which *you will say to the Americans if you ever go to that country*. Now, if you were, in that country, to put forth a paper, dated "in the year 1822 of the Carpenter's wife's son," you would, as surely as your name is Richard Carlile, be instantly dressed in a coat of tar and feathers, and, in that dress, be ridden bare-rumped upon a rail, till you dropped off by the side of some wood or swamp, where you would be left to ruminant on the wisdom (to say nothing of the modesty) of setting up for a maker of span-new governments and religions.

With as deep an abhorrence of persecution and of your perse-

cutors as you can yourself feel, and with a determination not, on any account, again to trespass on your time,

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

W.M. COBBETT.

FARMER'S MEETING.

THIS Meeting, which was proposed to be held on *the 19th of February*, will now, in my opinion, be *unnecessary*; and, therefore, I shall proceed no further in it; the *reasons* for which I shall here state.—When I proposed it, it was *early in November*. At that time the follies of Mr. WEBB HALL were raging throughout the land; and there appeared scarcely any hope of awakening the farmers to a due sense of their danger. Nevertheless I very much wished to do it; and, with that view, as I explicitly stated, I invited two farmers from each county to come to

London, in February, in order, that *some short paper*, in the form of Resolutions, or otherwise, might be adopted by us *for circulation in the several counties*. This was the object of the intended Meeting. Now, seeing that the farmers do *already see their danger*; seeing that Webb HALL's nonsense is blown to air; seeing that the *counties regularly convened* are saying all that we could have said in the proposed paper; seeing that even the county of *Suffolk* has agreed to petition for *Reform*; seeing all this, the proposed Meeting if persevered in could only be to bring gentlemen from their homes for the gratification of my personal vanity, a thing which would justly expose me to their censure. Names have already been sent me from all the counties in England except *nine*. I beg the gentlemen, whose names have been sent, to be assured, that I shall be very happy to see them at my house at any time, when they happen to come to London. The *Landlords*

seem, at last, to be convinced, that *Reform*, and that alone, can save their estates. The cause, they have now found, is *theirs*, as well as that of the *Labouring-Classes*. They have now found, that there is no possibility of relief without a great reduction of taxation; that this cannot be effected to the necessary extent without a reduction of the interest of the Debt; that this cannot be done without the most barefaced injustice till the army be reduced to the mere colonial standard, and till the barrack system be broken up; and, that these cannot take place *without a reform of the parliament*. The LETTERS TO LANDLORDS, the LETTERS TO EARL GREY, the RUSTIC HARANGUES, and particularly that at HUNTINGDON, have PROVED this to the Landlords. The *doing* of the thing *belongs to them*; and, *let them do it*. It is an honour quite enough for me to have produced the conviction in their minds; and this is an honour, which, let

envy do what it will, the nation will award me. To see the *labouring classes* well off; to see my country rid of the curse of pauperism; to see her bearing her head aloft, never desiring but always ready for war; to see these things has been the constant wish of my heart; and, trusting that I now shall see them, I am not at all anxious to put myself forward in the scenes that are at hand; but I shall always, I hope, be ready to exert in the cause of my country whatever useful powers it may have pleased God to give me.—Reader, pray look at the Petition from the *County of Suffolk*! If you have been an observer of passing events for any length of time, *bless yourself at the change!* — A word to the *old Reformers* here. Let me beg of them not to *reject* the converts; or, be themselves *less zealous* in the cause now, when it is likely to succeed, than they were when there appeared no chance of such likelihood. Let them not in their conduct resemble

those labourers in the vineyard, whose envy JESUS CHRIST so justly reprobated. Let them not, like "Glory," turn their backs to the damsel merely because she is in a complying humour. Let me hope, that not a man of them will act this part; for, to do that would be to show, that such man *never really wanted to see a Reform*, or wanted it only *to gratify some selfish feeling of his own*; or, at best, not from any generous motive.—At the Suffolk Meeting LORD CALTHORPE objected to Reform being part of the petition, because *immediate relief* was wanted, and Reform would be a *long time about*. I will, *in my next*, show that it might actually be accomplished and its effects be at work by *the month of May next*.

W.M. COBBETT.

HUNTINGDON MEETING.

On Tuesday last, the 22d instant, a Meeting was held at the George Inn, at Huntingdon, to take into

consideration the propriety of petitioning the House of Commons on the subject of the distress which now pervades all the active classes of the community, and the agricultural class in particular.

The Meeting was large and most respectable. A dinner was provided at the George, and the company, Samuel Wells, Esq. having been called to the Chair, sat down to it at half-past two o'clock.

After the cloth was removed, and after some matters of ceremony of minor importance,

The CHAIRMAN introduced the subject of the petition in a neat and appropriate speech, of which the following is the substance:—He said, that after sixteen years of arduous struggle against the corruptions and violences of the fatal system of Mr. Pitt, he had, thank God, lived to see some hope of a change. He could wish that this hope had been inspired by any thing rather than the distress which had called them together; he could wish that the gentlemen and yeomen of the County of Huntingdon and the vicinity had been awakened to the dangers of that system in their days of delusive prosperity; he could wish, that while they themselves were prosperous and happy, they had foreseen, that in the end they must suffer from this system as well as others were then suffering; but, at

any rate, he rejoiced that they now saw the system in its true light, though taught by severe suffering; for unless they did see it in its true light, and unless they resolved to change it for a better, there must be an end to those liberties for which their ancestors had fought and bled. Many now present could bear witness to the zeal, the disinterested exertions that he had made against that wicked system for the last twenty years of his life. After many, many years of the vilest political slavery, the county had gained something like freedom when it returned its present noble and excellent Representative, Lord John Russell. But there was much more to do in order to arrive at that complete victory, with any thing short of which they ought not to be contented. God knows what difficulties he had had to struggle with during the period to which he had alluded.—When he looked back on the series of persecutions that he had had to endure, he sometimes felt astonished that he was still in existence. To describe the mortifications, the insults, the persecutions of all sorts that he had had to endure, was quite beyond his, or the power of any man that ever existed. To have an idea of the thousandth part of them, they must be *felt*; and he did not wish even his enemies to gain the knowledge by so cruel a proof.—He thanked God,

however, that at last a change had arrived. He rejoiced at the change, though produced by suffering, since it was to be produced by no other means. The proof of that change was now actually before his eyes; for when was there a meeting like the present in the County of Huntingdon? They all knew, that on the day of their great triumph (and a most glorious triumph it was,) when they dined in that very room to celebrate the return of their amiable, upright and excellent Representative, Lord John Russell, who was an honour even to his illustrious house, they could muster only eighty-two persons to sit down to dinner; and he now saw, in that same room, something approaching to double that number. “Well then,” said he, “I have not laboured in vain; I have not suffered persecution for nothing; and I have, Gentlemen, no hesitation in saying, that this is the proudest day of my life.” He proceeded to observe, that it was not now, that a new light had broken in upon him. He had seen so long as sixteen years ago, that something like what had now taken place, would take place. It was impossible that so profligate a system should last for any great number of years, and equally impossible, that it should not be attended with consequences such as they then beheld and had to deplore, though he must again say, that even these consequences,

melancholy as they were, were to be hailed with joy, as the means of dissipating that blind infatuation in which the far greater part of those around had so long lived, and which infatuation alone had so long prolonged the reign of that Faction, whose counsels had at last brought real and tangible ruin home to the fire-side of every man, not drawing his means of support out of the property or industry of his neighbours. He had kept his eye upon the faction of Mr. Pitt; and he could trace almost every man of them, who had made any considerable figure in the ranks of persecution, to some signal act of *apostacy*; and it is a maxim, as old as Iscariot himself, that apostates are the cruelest of persecutors.—Mr. Pitt himself started in the race of power with being an apostate from the cause of Reform. Lord Castlereagh was a violent Reformer, far more radical than any man of the present day. Look, too, said he, at the Lawyers, of whom apostacy has to boast as its converts. See how sleekly they look in their official garb.—Was *equity* ever so snug as when in the hands of a pupil of this repentant school? and did an *ex-officio* ever thunder more melodiously than coming from a *solicitor*, who had almost worn himself out in execrations on the persecuting faction to whom he has disposed of the remnant of his days? Will you

look still higher? Then behold the favourite child of apostacy, seated where I need not describe; he, the companion and even crony of Mr. Horne Tooke; far too much of a Reformer for the Whigs; stopping at nothing on the score of something more serious than politics: look at him, the former reviler of the Pitt Faction—the scoffer by excellence. See him now on his seat on high, the willing, the ready, the officious agent of the Pitt Faction, surpassing them all in piety, and surpassing them all in political apostacy and cruelty. I conclude, Gentlemen, with proposing, for your adoption, a petition, the draft of which I hold in my hand; and I shall only add, that, in my opinion, it accords with the advice of our worthy Representative, Lord John Russell, who, in his Letter addressed to us, and just published, says, let your Petition be *firm, strong and resolute*.

The Petition was then put, and, after some little objection on the part of Michael Wells, Esq. was carried with only three hands held up in the negative.

The Petition, which, we understand, was signed in a few hours by upwards of ninety persons, was in the following words:—

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled;

"The Petition of the Land-owners, Farmers, and Traders, whose Names are undersigned, residing in the County of Huntingdon, and parts adjacent; most humbly sheweth—

" That the affairs of your Petitioners are in a state of embarrassment, and themselves and families in a state of distress and alarm, of which they are wholly unable to lay an adequate description before your Honourable House. That it is their sincere conviction, that, unless an efficient remedy be speedily applied, a convulsion of the most alarming nature must be the final consequence; —for they see the hour approaching, when rents must go unpaid, taxes and tithes uncollected, relief to the poor undistributed, and, when the labouring classes, raging with hunger, will be induced to satisfy that hunger by acts of violence.

" The cause of this state of suffering and danger, cannot, your Petitioners humbly presume, be other than manifest to your Honourable House; but your humble Petitioners beg leave to express their decided opinion, that the immediate cause is that Act of your Honourable House, which has, in fact, tripled the value of money, compared with the price of produce, and which, leaving the taxes unreduced and contracts unmodi-

fied, has, in fact, tripled those taxes, and disturbed and violated all existing contracts.

" Your Petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that your Honourable House will be pleased to adopt measures to rectify all contracts, according to the alteration in the value of money; that you will be pleased to abolish all sinecures and grants—all pensions not fully merited by real public services—to discharge the standing army---to curtail the civil list, and to reduce the interest of the public debt,---so that the burthen of taxation may be greatly alleviated. These measures being, in the fixed opinion of your humble Petitioners, absolutely necessary to put an end to the present distress and misery, and to turn aside the dangers which now menace every species of property, as well commercial as agricultural, and which, in the conviction of your Petitioners, threaten to produce scenes of disorder, confusion, and violence, which duty to their families, their country, and their King, compels them to anticipate with a degree of sorrow and alarm not in their power to describe.

" Your Petitioners are not insensible to the defective state of the Representation in the House of Commons, as at present constituted, and cannot, therefore, help expressing their decided opinion that the manifold evils that at

present afflict this unhappy country, are increased, if not occasioned, by this unfortunate circumstance. We, therefore, earnestly hope your Honourable House will lose no time in instituting an inquiry into the present state of such Representation, in order that your Petitioners, and the People at large, may receive that which they feel is their birthright---a full, fair, and free Representation."

Several toasts were drunk during the evening---"The King,"---"The Memory of the Queen,"---"Prosperity to the County of Huntingdon,"---"Lord John Russell,"---"Earl Fitzwilliam,"---"Lord Milton," and many others; amongst which was that of "Mr. Cobbett," who, being present, addressed the Meeting in substance as follows:

Mr. COBBETT--**Mr. Vice President**, can you *hear me*? [The Gentleman having answered in the affirmative, Mr. C. proceeded.] Because I am anxious that every man in the room should distinctly hear an expression of the gratitude that I feel for the very great honour that all present have bestowed upon me.—Having, Gentlemen, returned you my thanks, which I do with the greatest sincerity, I should attempt nothing more, feeling myself wholly incapable of making good that which the appellations and epithets bestowed on me by the worthy Chairman would

lead you to expect; but, there are two documents circulating in your neighbourhood, upon which I cannot refrain from making, upon this occasion, a few observations. I allude to an article entitled "*Noble Conduct of Earl Fitzwilliam*," and to a Letter of *Lord John Russell*, who is one of your County Members, which Letter I have, for the first time, seen this morning. The conduct of my Lord Fitzwilliam is truly worthy of the epithet that has been bestowed on it: it is really noble: it is worthy of all the praises that have been bestowed on it. I am satisfied also, that the Letter of the latter Nobleman has arisen from the best of motives; namely, that of an anxious desire of seeing the sufferings of the country mitigated, at least, and of contributing towards the effecting of that mitigation. But, Gentlemen, while I do justice to the motives of these your noble neighbours, I am compelled to say, that I think them both in *error*; and, as I think that these errors are calculated to encourage the indulgence of false hopes, and, of course, to prolong the sufferings of the country, and to place the adoption of a real remedy at a greater distance, I think myself bound to endeavour to prove to you, that these Noblemen are in error; but, in doing this, I beg you to be assured, that I mean nothing disrespectful to either of them, admiring as I do

the conduct of the former, and satisfied as I am of the upright intentions of both: The *nature of the distresses*; that is to say, the sort they are of, the effects they produce, the manner in which they operate, are pretty well understood.—The causes of them, too, are no longer hidden, except from very dull eyes. But, there seems to be but too good reason to fear that their probable *extent* is not yet so clearly understood as it ought to be; while, as far as I have perceived, there are comparatively few of those who complain to the Parliament, who point out to that body any efficient *remedy*. It is, then, as to these two things, the extent of the evil and the remedy for it, that I wish, Gentlemen, to direct some portion of your attention. And I think you will find, that the Noble Earl is in error as to the former, and that the Noble Lord is in error as to the latter. With regard to the *extent* of the evil, or, more properly speaking, the depth to which prices will fall, and to which the losses of tenants and landlords will go, if the present measures continue to be enforced, my Lord Fitzwilliam certainly deceives himself. It is with great diffidence, or, rather, with great reluctance that I express an *opinion*, in this case, different from that of his Lordship, whose conduct has been so truly honest and generous. That conduct, as is

stated to the public, is this: the Noble Earl, having called his tenants together, said to them in substance,—“ Prices have now found their level; they will not sink lower than they now are; they are now at the mark of the years from 1792 to 1795; I, therefore, though your leases bind you to higher rents, reduce your rents to the standard of those years, and thus place you in the situation in which you stood in those years.” And, then, it is added, that the noble Earl reduced the rents in the amount of from thirty-five to forty-five per cent. Gentlemen, this is, indeed, a noble act. I am, I would fain hope, amongst those who would be the last in the world to wish to take from such an act any part of its great merits. But, I am not the less convinced, that the noble Earl’s view of the matter is wholly erroneous; and that his error, as I observed before, has a tendency to prolong the sufferings of the country, and especially to produce the complete ruin of the tenant first, and finally of the landlord. In the noble Earl’s statement, there are two positions: first, that *prices will not fall lower, on an average, than the mark of the four years ending with 1795*: second, that, if they do not, the tenant, paying the rent of that period, *will be in the same situation that he was in during that period*, which, for brevity’s sake, I will

call the period of 1793. Now, Gentlemen, if, as to both these positions his Lordship be in error; if prices must naturally sink far below the mark of 1793; or, if, even supposing them not to sink below it, the tenant cannot be in the same situation that he was in at that period, what is the use of adjusting the rent to that period; and how dangerous may his Lordship's errors prove both to landlords and tenants, and particularly to the latter! I am persuaded, indeed I am fully convinced, that prices will fall far below those of 1793: and, I am also convinced, that if they remain at their present mark, the tenant will be wholly unable to pay even *half the rent* that he was well able to pay in 1793. Either my Lord Fitzwilliam or I must be in very great error. I am not presumptuous enough to put my *opinions* before you in the balance against the *opinions* of a nobleman, whom you all so much respect; but, my *reasons* I may venture to submit in opposition to the opinions of any man; and these reasons, in opposition to the two positions of the noble Earl, I shall now, with as much brevity as the case will admit of, submit for your consideration. As to the first position, namely, *that prices will not come down below the present mark, which is said to be the mark of 1793*, it would be impossible for me to divine on what it can have been founded. It

is now universally acknowledged, except by Mr. Webb Hall and a few others, that it is the Bill of Mr. Peel that has brought down prices; that is to say, that Bill and the previous measures of the Bank since the spring of 1814. In other words, the diminution in the quantity of circulating money. This being admitted, why are we to suppose, that the quantity of money will not grow less than it now is? It has been growing less and less ever since the Bill was passed. Prices have, on an average of seasons, kept falling lower and lower. And, you all well know, that though prices really are not now equal to those of 1793, wheat would have been about *fifteen shillings a bushel*, after such a harvest as the last, if that harvest had happened in 1793; nay, you know, that it was at that price in 1796, after a bad harvest, though, as you will please to bear in mind, the Bank at that time had no protecting law, and was, of course, compelled to pay in gold.—This shows clearly, that there was more circulating medium afloat in 1793 than there is now; and, if Mr. Peel's Bill has already brought us down lower than the mark of 1793, what will it do by the time that it shall go into full effect in May 1823; when the Bank of England notes will no longer be a legal tender; when the country-banks will be compelled to pay in gold; and

when the far greater part of those banks will of necessity have totally disappeared?—It is supposed by some, and, indeed, by the Agricultural Committee, that when cash payments shall be completely resumed, we shall be, as to amount of circulating medium, *where we were in 1792 and on to 1795*. Indeed! A supposition, Gentlemen, against all the reasons of the case; against all general experience, and in the teeth direct of every fact that the history of the two last years has presented to our eyes and fixed in our minds. The lessening of the quantity of the circulating medium cannot, it appears to me, stop at the mark of 1796, nor, at that of 1792. Pray remark, that from 1783 to 1796, a space of 13 years, the paper-money had been increasing exceedingly, not only in England, but in all the countries of Europe and in America. Remark, too, that though our Bank did not refuse to pay in gold till 1797, it was *unable* to pay in 1796, and had been, doubtless, for many years before that time; that which took place in 1797, being merely a discovery, a publication, of a state of inability to pay in gold, which state of inability had long before existed. But, now, and after this discovery too, the Bank is to be compelled to pay in gold: and what reason is there, let me ask you, to believe, that when the hour of real compulsion shall come,

the quantity of circulating medium will be as great as it was before the Bank-stoppage; that is to say, before there existed any suspicion of the ability of the Bank to pay in gold; before any one thought gold more secure than paper; before the perfection of the art of forging had rendered paper so hazardous; and before the Bank had found it necessary to place any restraint at all upon its issues? What reason, I again ask, is there to suppose that, when cash-payments shall have been completely, and legally, and compulsorily resumed in May, 1823, there will be as much medium in circulation as there was previous to the Bank stoppage? From 1783, or thereabouts, when Mr. Pitt began his paper-system of sinking funds; from that period up to the period of the stoppage, there was a regular increase of the paper-money. The consequent absence of the gold gave rise during that period to the *five pound notes*; certain proof of the vast increase of the paper before 1795, in which last year, there was not any thing like so much gold in circulation as there is at this time; and if people's confidence had suffered the Bank to go on without stopping, there must have been smaller notes for the want of gold. What reason then, again I ask, is there for supposing that the quantity of circulating medium will be at the mark of that period, when cash-payments shall have

been really resumed? Some people imagine that the quantity of circulating medium is come down to its lowest mark, because they see sovereigns and shillings afloat; and, indeed, this is the idea of my Lord Fitzwilliam. But, if the Bill of Mr. Peel has lessened the quantity of paper-money, why is it now to cease at once producing that effect?—It is not cash-payments yet. The Bank itself is not compelled to pay except in bars. It does pay in specie, because it is more profitable to do that than to pay in bars at the standard mint price. But the country bankers do not pay in specie. They are still protected against cash-payments. Let the month of May 1823, come, when that protection will be removed; when all will be compelled to pay in gold on demand; and, I ask, whether it be possible to believe that there will not be less of paper-money afloat than there now is? If there be less afloat, there will be more gold—but not in quantity equal to that of the present paper; because this gold must come from other countries; because the drawing away from other countries can be only to a limited extent; and because in whatever degree we draw gold from other countries, we raise its value there, and lower the price of the necessities of life in those countries. On these reasons, Gentlemen, not to tire you with others

that I might urge, I found my opinion, that prices of English produce have not yet reached their lowest point of depression; that they will come down lower, and much lower than those of the period from 1792 to 1795; and, of course, that my Lord Fitzwilliam is in error when he supposes, that *the farmer will now be able to pay the rent which he was able to pay during that period*.—But, Gentlemen, supposing me to be wrong and his Lordship right, as to this first position. Let us, for argument's sake, suppose, that prices *really have found their level*; that they are come to their *lowest*; that they will, on an average, remain at that mark; and that that lowest is not lower than the mark of *peace* in 1792. For the sake of the argument, let us admit all this; and, even with this admission, I am able, I think, to make it clear to you, that still the tenant will not be able to pay the same rent, no nor *half* the rent, that he paid in the year 1792. Gentlemen, if rents were *all* the outgoings that a tenant had to think about, his would be a very simple affair. There are three other things; *taxes, rates, and tithes*; and, in order to shew, that the tenant will be able to pay the same rent that he paid during the last peace, you must shew that he has no more to pay under these three heads than he had to pay then. How much more he has to pay,

Gentlemen, he feels every day of his life ; and, in fact, he has now *three times* as much to pay on account of taxes and rates as he had to pay then. This we know to a certainty, because we know, that the Parliament has now imposed taxes, and collects taxes, to the amount of *fifty-three millions* a year, instead of the *sixteen millions* a year, which the nation had to pay in the year 1792. We know also, that, in 1792, the poor-rates did not exceed *two millions and a quarter*, and that they now exceed three times that sum. These are the heavy burdens ; these are the real weight upon the tenant ; the rent is a trifle compared to these ; this every farmer well knows ; and, if these be three times what they were in 1792, how is the tenant, with prices of 1792, to pay the rent of 1792 ?—I do not wish to lay any very great stress upon the *tithes*. I know, that a tenth is always a tenth and no more ; and, whatever I may think of the conduct of a great many of the receivers of tithes, I will make no attempt at unfairness of representation. But, though a tenth is always a tenth, the deduction is felt more severely when the other nine parts are heavily taxed, than it is when they are lightly taxed, or not taxed at all. Therefore, in fact, the tenant is worse off even as to *tithe* than he was in 1792. It is however the taxes and rates that crush him and

disable him from paying the rent of 1792. In the first place there are the *taxes on his own consumption* of malt, salt, soap, candles, sugar, tea, leather, and other things. This, in a large family, amounts to a large sum ; and, recollect, it is three times as great a sum as it was in 1792.—Then come the smith, the wheelwright, and collar-maker. All these, besides the tax on the iron and leather they use, have their tax on consumption to pay ; these taxes on consumption must be paid by the farmer, and these are three times as great as they were in 1792. Last, and most important of all, comes the *labour*. Will the same wages do for him that did for him in 1792 ? Go, Gentlemen, to the chandler's shop of a Saturday night ; put down the articles that the labourer purchases ; set the amount of the tax opposite each ; and you will find that two-fifths, if not the half, of his wages go away in taxes, and that two-thirds of these taxes have been added since the year 1792.—It will be said, perhaps, that this is nothing to the farmer, for that he does not pay the labourer higher wages than he paid him in 1792 ; and this, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is the fact. But, if the farmer does not pay him higher wages, is he not compelled to pay, in the shape of additional poor-rates, that which he does not pay in additional

wages? Gentlemen, you know well that it is thus. And here let me appeal to your hearts as well as to your understandings, in defence of the character of the English labourer. Let such men as Mr. Scarlett call these millions of our countrymen, idle, drunken, profligate, abandoned wretches, and propose laws on such a basis. Let us look at the real cause of their misery and degradation; let us reflect how many of ourselves have sprung from labourers; how many of us, probably, now in this room, of whom I am one. Let us be just, and not seek to screen the faults of the powerful by ascribing their effects to the defenceless. It is the taxes that make paupers, and it is nothing else. Such men as Mr. Scarlett ascribe to the vices of the labourers that which has come from the squanderings of the Government. They call out against the act of Queen Elizabeth, when it is notorious that that act continued in force for two hundred years, not only without increasing the number of paupers, but that it had diminished the number, until the system of heavy taxation and paper-money began. But, look at the taxes, and look at the poor-rates, and you will find that both have gone on increasing together, and, as nearly as possible, in the same proportion. Taking, then, the wages and the poor-rates together, if the tenant has three times

as much to pay on this account as he had to pay in 1792; if he has three times as much to pay on account of malt and other articles of domestic consumption; if he has three times as much to pay on account of those parts of his farm—tradesmen's bills; and if the relative weight of his tithes is augmented: if this is the case, Gentlemen, can he now, at 1792 prices, pay a rent suited to 1792? Messrs. Baring and Ricardo and the rest of that profound school (to which belong also the authors of the Agricultural Report) tell us, that the consumer of farm produce pays the taxes, rates, and tithes. Very true; but, then, in order to enable the farmer to pay these in the first place, and to pay rent too, he must have an increase of *price* in proportion to the increase of taxes, rates, and relative weight of tithes. And, this price he has not; for, all these outgoings are tripled, while the price of 1792 is that which my Lord Fitzwilliam says is to remain to be the settled price. Thus, then, Gentlemen, it is, I think, clear, that even if prices go no lower than their present mark, the tenant cannot pay in rent the half of what he paid in 1792; and, if I am right as to the first position also, that is to say, if prices fall a great deal lower than their present mark, is it not clear, that the tenant will be able to pay *no rent at all*, and that the whole of the pro-

duces will be absorbed by food and raiment for the tenant, by tithes, taxes, and rates? Once more I beg you to be assured, that a sense of duty, and that only, could have induced me, under the present circumstances, and at this moment, and in this place, to have publicly dissented from any thing coming from a Nobleman who has acted in so generous a manner; but, for his sake as well as for that of the tenantry, the subject should be placed in a fair light; and, besides, it is not *opinions* that I oppose to the opinions of this Nobleman. To his opinions I oppose reasoning, which is the common property and birthright of all mankind. Now, Gentlemen, if I am fortunate enough to have convinced you, that I am right as to the two propositions on which, at the expence of your patience, I have said so much, in what a situation is this country? If the natural progress of things be to take all rents away, what is the *remedy* to be applied?—This brings me to the letter, before alluded to, of the Member for your own county, which letter, as I before stated, I saw, for the first time, a few hours ago. My Lord John Russell proposes to reduce the taxes in the amount of *five millions*, and protests against touching the interest of the debt. Observe, Gentlemen, that this is a reduction from *fifty-three* millions a year to *forty-eight*, very

little more than *one-eleventh part*. Can such a reduction enable the farmer to pay the rent of 1792? Can it enable him to pay *any rent at all*. Apply your own sound sense, your plain common sense, to this matter, and you will see, that such a reduction could be no remedy at all for such an evil. No, Gentlemen, to enable the tenants to pay rents, the mass of taxation must come down to the standard of 1792. I am persuaded a great deal lower, but to that mark at the least. How, then, is this to be accomplished? Certainly not without a reduction, and a very large one, of the interest of the debt. To this it must come. They may do what they will. They may try and try again; they may even undergo the indelible disgrace of putting forth bales of paper again; they may borrow, postpone, shuffle and deal it as they like; they must, at last, come to a reduction of the interest of the debt. And yet, who will dare to propose such a measure unless the *army be first discharged?* For, after the debt, this is the great load of expence. And why not get rid of it? How many ages passed without any such thing as a soldier, in time of peace, being known in England? And what do we now want with a standing army, with barracks, fortresses, and all the enormous attendant expences? It will be said that the army is neces-

sary to keep the *Radicals* in order. Now, that is very true; and I frankly confess, that an army is necessary for this purpose. But, would it not be best then to get rid of the Radicals? And why not do it at once? I would extinguish the Radicals in quick time. The troublesome, noisy fellows should soon cease to trouble me. They are everlastingly bawling for a Reform of the Parliament; and I would toss into their mouths the thing they are bawling for.—That is the way, and be you well assured, Gentlemen, that it is the *only way*, of restoring tranquillity and happiness to this great, opulent, and justly renowned, but now harassed and distracted kingdom. Ah! it will, by some, be said; but what a set of low-bred, illiterate, and stupid fellows a reformed House of Commons would be! Gentlemen, a County Member in Somersetshire has lately assured the distressed people there, that the Parliament and the Ministers participate in their sorrows at what has happened. Now, then, could a reformed Parliament do any thing *more* than what the present has done? God forbid I should utter a sound tending to bring the present House of Commons into contempt, not having, at this present time, any inclination for a trip beyond the seas; but I may ask, and I will ask, what a reformed Parliament could have done *worse* than ruin all

the tenants of the country, and rob all the landlords of their estates? What a reformed Parliament could have done worse than break all contracts to the enriching of all the idle at the expence of the laborious, to send the farmer to gaol and his family to the poor-house, in order to give triple pay to the placeman and pensioner, and to give the Nobleman's estate to the Jews and Jobbers of 'Change Alley? We forbear to speculate on the manner in which a Reformed Parliament would be engaged at a crisis like this; for, what can imagination afford in comparison to the reality of that which we now behold; but of which neither pen nor tongue will be able to convey to posterity any adequate idea? From that book which we all read, we learn that they were married and given in marriage, till Noah went into the Ark: Mr. Gibbon (I think it is) tells us, that the Turks were thundering at the gates of Constantinople, while the Christians within were disputing about grace and free-will. And, while the very foundations of society are breaking up in England, its Parliament is busily occupied with the means of causing two-penny publications to be sold for six-pence, and with turning those of one sheet into others of three sheets and a quarter, and that, too, for the express purpose of narrowing the circulation of that knowledge which is

absolutely necessary to give us even a chance of putting an end to those evils which that Parliament itself must necessarily deplore.— Gentlemen, I had before to thank you for the honour you had done me in drinking my health: I have now to express my gratitude for the kindness which has allowed me to consume so much of your time.

AGRICULTURAL MEETING
AT KING'S LYNN,
NORFOLK.

ON Tuesday a public Dinner, at which nearly two hundred persons sat down together, was held at King's Lynn, on the subject of Agricultural Distress. Mr. Cobbett attended in consequence of a special invitation. The following toasts were drunk;—"The King,"—"The Sovereignty of the People,"—"The Memory of Caroline of Brunswick, the illustrious and injured Queen of England,"—"Prosperity to the Agricultural Interest of the County of Norfolk."

The Chairman (Mr. AYR) proposed the "health of Mr. Cobbett." In introducing Mr. Cobbett's name, he said he felt it necessary to state that, however much he admired him as a sound political writer, he regarded him still more highly as the friend of Reform. Mr. C. had

done more for Reform than thousands put together. He shed torrents of light on England; yet no man was more grossly vilified. The hireling press constantly calumniated him; but there he was, after all, amongst them, hale and hearty. He (the Chairman) did not hope that Mr. C. might live for a thousand years; but he hoped he would live to see established a thorough Reform of Parliament—a radical, rational Reform. (*Applause.*)—He wished to see corruption cut up root and branch—and, feeling these sentiments strongly, made him admire the more the Gentleman whose name he had announced to them.

The health was drunk amidst the greatest applause.

Mr. COBBETT then got on the table. He assured the Meeting that it was not to set himself off that he sought that elevated position, but to prevent any disappointment taking place, so far as he could prevent it; but which, after all, he was afraid must partially be the case. He offered his sincere thanks to the Meeting for the honour they had just done him. It was a reward for past services, which he looked upon as ten thousand times more valuable than all the money or honours that could be bestowed by Kings or Ministers, or any body else. (*Applause.*) In passing through the town of Ely to King's Lynn, the day before, he happened to put

his head out of the window of the coach just as it drew up there, and inquired of the coachman the name of the town. He was told it was Ely, and he thought that he would look at the spot where the Local Militia were once flogged. (*Applause.*) What a crowd of reflections pressed upon his mind at the moment! "It is now exactly twelve years," continued Mr. C. "since I underwent a prosecution, and for what? For nothing injurious to the King or to the Government---for nothing that tended to throw odium upon any thing that was good or praiseworthy---not for shaking the foundation of any of our institutions---in short, for no crime except that of expressing aloud the indignation which I felt at the Local Militia being flogged under the guard of German bayonets. (*Applause.*) Bear in mind that I have kept up the publication of my *Register* for twenty years successively, and not a week of that period has elapsed without my putting forward my opinion upon some matter of politics. I leave you to judge then how harmless that man must be, in whose writings, for a long unbroken term of twenty years, no other fault could be found out by the prying eyes of the Minister except this one; and this too, the expressing of indignation at that which, if I was not indignant at, I should be unworthy the name, not only of Englishman, but of man. Con-

nected with Agricultural Distress, singular as it may seem, is this very subject that I now speak of—the flogging of the Local Militia. The consequence of my expressing the indignation which I felt, was a two years' imprisonment in the felons' gaol in Newgate; and I ransomed myself from the society of these felons only at the expense of 2000*l.* of hard money. There was then to be paid, on my coming out of prison, the fine of 1000*l.* to the King; in addition to which I was held to bail for seven years, which expired in 1819, not only that I should not write libels, but that I should not commit even a common assault, to keep good behaviour, at the peril, myself of 3000*l.* and two sureties in 2000*l.* But I have out-lived the seven years, and perhaps you are of opinion that I may live for one or two more. During that seven years I did keep my good behaviour. The Minister confessed in Parliament, that he showed all my publications to the Law Officers of the Crown, and he was sorry to say that there was nothing in them which would justify them in instituting a prosecution against me for libel. Now, Gentlemen, bear in mind, it was during my imprisonment in Newgate that I set myself to work upon that system which is now working so upon you. It was there that I traced the origin and the consequences of that system, which is now bringing to beggary so many families. It is that work, *Paper*

against Gold, of which I shall ever be proud. It was not two, or three, or four years ago, when the effects of the system were so manifest, that nobody could misunderstand whence they sprung—but it was 13 years ago since I wrote that book, in which every thing that is now happening was most clearly anticipated. These were the thoughts that arose out of my unexpected visit to the scene of the Local Militia flogging, and that too in my way to a place where I am receiving a reward for all these persecutions, ten thousand times more valuable than all that is in the power of Kings to bestow. Gentlemen, I say again, as I said at the dinner which was given to me in London, on my arrival from America, that in order to obtain honest fame, it is necessary to suffer. There is no eminence, no laudable distinctions, to be got at, except by toil, and trouble, and pain. The path of fame is not a level path—such, for instance, as you have here between your fens—but steep and rugged, and difficult of access, like the mountainous roads of Wales. During my persecutions, no man can say that I ever despaired—that anything, however oppressive and galling, ever drew from me one syllable or act of ill-humour, or that a word of lamentation fell from my lips. I always said that our enemies were strong—terrifically powerful—that they had fresh shackles for us, and would impose them;

but I shall see the day when these shackles shall burst asunder—when my base calumniators shall be covered with confusion and shame, and I shall be hailed unanimously even by those who are my present enemies—not, indeed, as the saviour of my country, for I do not pretend to such merit, but as a man who foresaw the danger that was coming, and who, if his advice had been followed, would have prevented that danger from falling on the nation. (*Applause.*)—There are two topics on which I wished to address you; but before I proceed to these, I must observe on the total discomfiture of the nonsense of Webb Hall and his associates. It is the greatest thing that this country could do for its own honour to put an end to this piece of absurdity. The people saw rightly enough the nonsense of the proceedings of these men, but let me make a remark on their omissions. Webb Hall, with his associates, were employed in Henderson's Hotel in devising means for preventing thirty millions of bushels of corn from coming into this country in the course of three years. I showed that this number of bushels of corn would give the rate of three pints and a half of corn to each person in the kingdom per week for consumption. Webb Hall and his associates knew well enough, or they might have known, that more than this quantity would be used as breakfast powder. Yet

they saw no less than 26 people, with Mr. Hunt at their head, persecuted by suits in the Court of Exchequer, because they endeavoured to bring about the consumption of 30 million bushels of corn every three years, in addition to that already consumed, by the simple process of substituting corn for tea and coffee! Did Webb Hall and his associates pray for the repeal of the Act which makes it a crime to make coffee powder, as in consistency they ought to have done? — No, they did not. Is it not the most monstrous thing in nature, that there should be a law preventing the use of corn, at a time when the abundance of corn and low prices are subjects of bitter complaint? — Gentlemen, I now come to the topics on which I intended to address you. And first comes the Property Tax. The Property Tax, I hear, is the order of the day. There are two ways of laying that tax on. If it is a partial tax, and is confined to the fundholder, it is so much a reducing of the Debt, and so far so good; but it is not a Property Tax then—call it its right name, and then comes *The Feast of the Gridiron*. But if this tax is to be a general tax, if it is to extend to the landlord and occupiers of land (in which point of view I would wish to consider it now), if it is to be so extended, then I am prepared to show to any one but the proposers of the measure (for it is quite evi-

dent that they must have lost their senses), that the tax so laid on must operate injuriously on the tenant and landlord, both of whom will be in a worse condition, in consequence of it, than they are even at present. These are my reasons for this opinion. First, I say it is a monstrous thing to consider that the moment the tenant is in a state of ruin from the pressure of taxes—that the moment when he is sinking under his burdens, that it should be proposed by any person to lay on him more taxes. “Oh! no,” say the property-tax men, “we take off other taxes from the farmer, so that in balancing the taxes taken off and those newly imposed, there will be found to be a reduction of burden.” But that is not quite so clear; it is not quite clear to my mind that by taking off an apparently greater amount of *indirect* taxes, and imposing an apparently less amount of *direct* taxes, you put the farmer in a better condition. But what is the good proposed to be gained by this wise measure? “It will be a pretty conciliating way,” say they, “of bringing over the fundholder to contribute a little, as he ought, to the necessities of the State; we could not well ask him directly to do so, but this is a choice scheme for imposing upon him, and we will catch him.” Yes, indeed, catch a fundholder! Faith they are a little more cunning than the landholders, and

are not to be caught so easily. "Now," say the advocates of the plan, "we will make the fundholder pay something." But, in fact, the fundholder *does pay something*. He is a consumer -- all consumers pay *something*, and he pays his proportion. But if he does not pay "something," if he *feels* this new tax, if it is a burden to him, so will it be to the landlord. The landlord will feel it also to the same extent. But mark what the consequences will be to the landholder. *His* tax is assessed according to the value of the former year. Now, the value of money is rising every year, and thus the landlord, in consequence of this mode of assessment, will be paying in each year, in addition to the legal amount of the tax, the difference between the value of his property in the current year and what it was in the assessed year. But how is the fundholder situated? His fund is always the same, it bears invariably the same relation to the amount of his tax; and, if it rested there, he is considerably better off than the landlord. But it does not rest there; while the latter is paying his tax according to an erroneous standard, whilst his property is going down in value, that of the fundholder is gaining. In another point of view, if you compare the situation of landowner and fundholder with respect to this tax, it is infinitely the worse

for the former; because, pay the tax he must, come what will--bad harvests--bad crops--unfavourable markets, rent or no rent; but the fundholder has no risks to encounter, no changes to fear, but gains at every step. But it is said the fundholder does not lay out so much money as the landlord--but lends it. The money must be spent somewhere; it may be disposed of as a loan; but the borrower is at the loss. Of this you may be sure, that when a man lends money, he is always sure to make the borrower pay the piper. The truth is, that this Property-tax has its origin here. There are landlords, and some tenants, too, who have money in the funds. The funds, therefore, they do not like to touch, because they think that, if they do, all will break to pieces. There is another point on which I wished to address you, as connected with the principle which now seems to be so widely admitted--that the poor-rates are due to the taxes. Lord Fitzwilliam thinks it good to recommend to his tenants to "keep up" their labourers, and by their kindness to prevent these men from becoming paupers. But this, though amiable, is not of the least avail. It is not individual kindness, or individual exertions, that can meet such an evil as this. Every man will do the best he can for his own interest. He will seek to get every thing as cheap as he can;

he will procure labourers on the lowest wages he can: all this is natural---it is even necessary for the general welfare of society. It is only by some general regulation—some law—something to be done by Parliament, that you can make the farmer *able* to give good wages to the labourer; and it is only by enabling the farmer to give good wages that you can secure them for the labourer. And hence it is that I never would join those who railed at the farmer, because he had his labourers on low wages; the farmers *could not* give more; they had not money; the money which should go in wages to the labourer, is taken up by the tax-gatherer, and until this state of things is changed, there is nothing to be done. The reducing of the taxes is the great step towards working that change; and that cannot be done without diminishing the interest of the debt—and that cannot be done without a reduction of the army—and that is hopeless without a Reform in Parliament.—(*Applause.*)—Not to tire you with the discussion of points over and over again demonstrated---not to fatigue you with showing that it is just and right that he who contributes to the support of Government, and who is liable to be called out to risk his life in defence of it, should have a voice in the framing of laws, which are to affect his life and interests---not to go

over these beaten tracks, I shall simply consider Parliamentary Reform as a money concern. For after all, it is in this view that the consideration of it is likely to be of most avail. We want to save money. The Army, the Barracks, the Ordnance, Secret Service Money, a highly paid Police, Jobs, &c.—these items stand the country in about fifteen millions. What do we want of these things---what are the barracks for? Nothing *grows* in them; they produce nothing, except now and then a bastard child. What do we want of Ordnance---or Jobs? Now, if we get rid of these, here are fifteen millions cut off out of the fifty-three of annual expenditure. Now, Gentlemen, all these fifteen millions of money is spent in nothing more or less than preventing a Reform. It has no other object---it can have no other object. Ministers say very truly---and I despise the hypocrisy of those who say they can---they say that they cannot do without this expenditure. And why can they not? “Because the people are discontented,” say Ministers; “they are led away by designing demagogues and pretenders, who have no other object in view than leading them astray.” I agree with Ministers --- I say the people cannot be kept in order without such means. But give the people Parliamentary Reform, that will keep them quiet; and there will be an end to the ne-

cessity of the fifteen millions expenditure. Then there would be something cut off the burden that weighs so heavily upon the nation. They say there is something bad---something dangerous in Reform. What danger is there in it? The basis of Representation must be *property*. This is the cry. Mr. Dickenson, the other day, said that, for his part, he would consent to no Reform which had not this principle in it. But, as the case stands, according to the present principle of representation, affecting to have property for its basis, a fellow with forty shillings worth a-year of a freehold, is entitled to be represented; whereas the gentleman with a thousand times his property and stake in the country, must not be represented because he holds by copyhold or lease---And this is the great principle of property being the basis of representation! In the pot-wallopping boroughs, for instance, this principle is still better illustrated; because a man comes once a year and makes a pot boil, or gallop or wallop, he is entitled to vote for Members of Parliament, although he should have no more earthly effects than the pot and the water, and whatever may be in it; and this is the principle of property being the basis of representation! In many boroughs---I know not how this borough is situated, and must therefore take care what I say---

but in some boroughs, out of the 2,000 men of whom the borough may consist, a few only may be entitled to vote for Members of Parliament, and the worldly substance of these creatures---shoes, coats, and all, may not be a tithe of the property of the meanest of the class which has not the power to vote. In other boroughs, the Corporation has the right of nominating out-lying burgesses, who may be what they please; they may come down from London in rags, with not a shirt to their backs, and on those backs, naked as they are, they carry the basis of representation! But all this is pretence---there is no such principle---they know there is no such principle. Look to Ilchester, where the inhabitants, because they would vote for the man whom they wished to return, had the roofs of their houses taken off; and when that would not do, were forced out by the stench of the dung that was brought in for that purpose. The dung was here the basis of representation! But these are all false pretences; the agents of corruption dare not meet the question ---they know that if rational Reform once takes place, it will root out every noxious weed---they know they cannot keep their gains, and that they, some of whom have enjoyed offices almost since their birth, would at once lose that which gives them whatever of rank

and importance they hold in society. Give me leave to congratulate you on the strange conversion that has taken place in the counties---and let me add that in none is that conversion producing better effects than in this great county. I was delighted to hear Mr. Wodehouse the other day make the avowal he did, because it was an avowal that came from a source that always in the end works out the truth---namely, the pocket. Now out of this conversion will grow something worth your attention. These converts will be troublesome to Ministers. They must come to the Minister and say, "either you must take off these taxes, or we must do without our rents." And I should not be much surprised to hear the Ministers come forward and say that they cannot carry on the Government. This would be rather a surprising thing to see take place. I don't say it will take place, but I should not be surprised to see it. If this should be the consequence, one thing is clear, that the successors, be they who they may, cannot carry on the Government for an hour without taking off a great quantity of the taxes. They must repeal the six Acts. They must let the Reformers out of prison who are now suffering on account of the very principles in which they (the new Ministers,) can alone expect to do any good. It is as clear as day-light, that the system of the present Ministers

cannot be carried on without pursuing the very means now employed by them. There must be the same number of barracks. There must be the large standing armies, the jobs, and the secret service money --- all these little things are the *tar and grease* to the great state waggon. We hear the Ministers say, "Oh! you talk of jobs and pensions---what the deuce consequence are they?---they are not worth talking about." But they are grease and tar --- the grease and tar are nothing, but without them the waggon can't stir. The jobs and pensions are nothing, but without them the present system cannot move. It is impossible that the *same course* of Government can go on without the employment of the very same means that are now in use. It is vain to think it; therefore there must be a reform! My advice to the land-holder, and every other over-taxed man in the country is, whenever you are deliberating on the means of relief, think on reform as the only cure---ask for it---pray for it, for it alone can be a remedy for all your distress. But then let not our language be, "Here is our notion of reform, and we will have no other." This is wrong. If they won't have our plan, let them give us theirs---let us take what we can get. The cry is, "Oh, you ask too much, you shall have nothing. You can't agree among yourselves

as to the plan of reform you would have." This is false ; we did agree ---the plan which we agreed to is embodied in Major Cartwright's Bill. But supposing we had not agreed to a specific plan, have we not long ago agreed on the principle? Was it ever known yet, that a set of people were all of one mind, as to the particulars and filling up of any plan? Certainly not. We agreed by a majority. In Parliament they do not wait for the consent of all. The concurrence of a majority decides every thing---the law that takes away life and property, is not agreed to by all, but by a majority, and that majority perhaps a trifling one. Why then are we not to decide by a majority ? why are we to be put off by the absurd plea that we cannot *all* agree ? These are but the apologies of the enemies to reform ; therefore in all your petitions to Parliament, never forget to ask for this one thing---reform. Without it there is no reduction of taxes to be expected---no diminution of the burdens which overpower the country. Now bear in mind that whenever you see any publication coming from the Ministerial quarter, which endeavours to put a good face upon the thing, and saying that the matter is not so bad---that the distress is but temporary, and will soon be got over---when you see any of these things, I say, pay not the least attention to it, for it is as

clear as day-light that the lot of the landlord and tenant must be worse. The Agricultural Committee have attempted to persuade the landlords that things are not so bad. This is a very dangerous error for a man with a wife and family---for the hale young fellow that can work, it may not be so bad. But it is a most dangerous error, indeed, to rely on a resuscitation of prices. Prices cannot rise, I mean on the average. They may vary, to be sure, in the course of a year, as is the case always ; but rise generally and permanently, they cannot---it is impossible---it is written in Mr. Peel's Bill, that *prices shall not rise*. And let me press this upon you above all things ; nay, let me add, that prices not only will not rise, but they must fall. There is one thing, not mentioned by me before, which seems to illustrate the point for which I contend ; namely, that present prices cannot place the farmer in the state in which he was during the four or five years previous to cash payments. Let it be recollected, that *before* that time, the pay of the horse-soldier had been about 8d or 9d a day, and that of the foot soldier 6d. a day. *Before the stoppage of cash payments*, the former was raised to sixteen, and the latter to thirteen pence. So that, in the first place observe, that *before* cash payments were stopped, this great change had taken place ; and, further, that the soldier was

to have his *bread and meat* at a certain fixed price. How clearly this shows, that the money had begun to depreciate, and the labourer to suffer, even before the stoppage of the Bank! How clearly it shows, too, the error of the Agricultural Committee, in supposing, that gold-payments will suffer us to go back, in point of quantity of circulating medium, to the period just previous to the stoppage, and there stop. But, how stands the farmer and his labourer, as exhibited by this illustration of the case? Can the soldier be reduced to the old pay? God forbid! I remember too well what sixpence a-day was to wish for any such thing; I remember too well how often I was ready to die for love of a contractor's villainous brown loaf, ever to wish to see a soldier living upon sixpence a-day. But, if he does not now get *too much* (and I allow he does not), how stands the labourer? The soldier has, besides pay (*Sunday*s as well as working days), lodging, bedding, clothing, fuel, and candle. The horse-soldier has 9s. 4d. a week, the foot 7s. 7d. Can the farmer now give his labourer from 2s. 6d. to 3s. a-day? And, yet, they ought to have this, and more too, in order to put them on a level with the soldier. This he cannot pay them. Therefore, they are compelled to go for a part to the parish; thus the *rates* are augmented; and thus it is, that,

with present prices, the farmer cannot pay the rent that he paid before the stoppage of cash-payments. The soldier could not now exist upon what he formerly existed; for he has three times the taxes to pay that he formerly paid; but, how hard, then, is it with the labourer! His taxes must come out of the farmer's pocket, even those which go out of his pauper-allowance. And how, then, is the farmer, with present prices, to pay the rent that he paid before the stoppage at the Bank? Again and again I have to press on you that, by returning to the quantity of money that existed before cash payments, and no rent can be paid to the landholder who has not tenants' capital to draw upon. This cannot continue --- I think it out of the question to attempt to repeal Peel's Bill. Parliament, to be sure, is powerful to repeal, but *it will not* repeal the Bill. And, without the Bill is repealed, you cannot expect to have prices raised. Repealing the Bill would do greater injury---for then out comes the paper, every body will then know that there is no possibility of a specie currency again. Our merchants (to whom there is generally due about 20 millions,) are to be paid in paper---all contracts made in the contemplation of the continuance of this Bill will be violated, and after that England can never look an enemy

in the face. Now, why is all this? Because Parliament will not reform itself---because Government will not dispense with the 15 millions that are taken from the people, to keep up what is to prevent a reform---for if once the reform is obtained, then, indeed, you can begin to reduce the interest of the Debt with a good conscience. In every view then of our present difficulties, there is nothing good to be expected---no relief to be hoped for without a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament.---I thank you, Gentlemen, for the very long and indulgent attention, with which you have honoured me---I shall very long remember this kind payment of yours to me--- it is to me more than payment with interest for all the persecutions I have endured for my zeal and perseverance in this cause.---(*Long and loud applause.*)

After a short interval,

The CHAIRMAN rose, and stated that it was to little purpose to meet together and hear the soundest advice, without *doing something*. It was therefore that he had prepared certain resolutions, which, if they were agreed to, would be embodied in a petition to be presented to the House of Commons.

He then read the Resolutions, as follow:—

“ 1. That the rise in the value of money, and the depression in

the price of agricultural produce, which has been caused by the Act commonly called Mr. Peel's Bill, have totally destroyed the spirit of all contracts, and are so much enriching the public annuitant, placeman, and pensioner, at the expense of the landlord, the farmer, the tradesman, and all the labouring classes, that, unless a change be speedily adopted, a most awful convulsion must be considered as the natural consequence.

“ 2. That there appears to be every reason to suppose that prices will sink much lower than they now are; but that, even if they should not, it is evident to us that the land, in general, can yield no rent, seeing that the taxes, rates, and tythes, do now actually absorb all that is not absolutely necessary to be given in the shape of wages for the cultivation of the farm.

“ 3. That we see no remedy other than that of a very great reduction of the taxes; we are convinced that this reduction ought to begin with the army; we can see no use for that army, unless to keep the people in awe, and to prevent Parliamentary Reform; and seeing no prospect of an end to our calamities, but in a Reform of the Commons House of Parliament, it is the duty of every man to endeavour to obtain such Reform.

“ 4. That a petition, founded on these resolutions, be signed, and delivered to the County Members,

that they may present the same to the House of Commons on as early a day as possible."

The Resolutions being agreed to, the CHAIRMAN then read a petition, founded on the same, which was also adopted---The petition was exposed for signature during the evening, and upwards of 200 names were signed in the course of it.... The CHAIRMAN announced that Mr. Cobbett was about to retire.

Mr. COBBETT then rose, and stated, that in consequence of arrangements made by him to be in Exeter on Friday, it would be impossible for him to remain any longer with them. He would advise them, of all things, to place no reliance on the opinions of great men. He would have them guard against the notion, that a Minister was a conjuror. Let them take nothing on trust, but try every thing they heard or read by the test of their own judgment. If it tallied with their own deliberate opinion and experience, then they might believe; but unsupported by these, let them not take for granted one syllable that they saw or heard. The country was now in that state, that every man in it was called upon to *think*. They who brought it to what it was, confessed they did not know what they were about. Lord Grenville, the very man who signed the Order in Council, authorising the stoppage of cash payments --- he, this very

Lord Grenville, said, that, sooner than again bring about the misery and ruin which "the system" produced, he would rather run the risk of letting the enemy invade the country. He concluded by wishing them health and happiness, and when Parliamentary Reform had taken place, he would hope for prosperity to agriculture; for not till that took place could agriculture flourish.

Mr. Cobbett then withdrew, and the Meeting gradually dispersed.

PEEL THE GREAT.

"CANTATE MECUM."

To be sung twice a week throughout England.

Come! let us sing, both loud and bold,
In praise of *Peel* and Guinea-Gold.
We hope that we shall never see
Another paper Currency.

Paper! that buys each rotten vote!
Thin, paltry paper, call'd a Note;
Notes rhyme to *Votes*, and Votes to *Notes*;
Huzza for *Peel* with all our throats!

Bless'd be his head so full of knowledge!
That head just piping hot from College;
College, from whence all learning flows,
That College with the *Brazen Nose*!

College so fam'd for learned Doctors;
College well fill'd with Priests and Proctors;
College, where all good *Fellows* join
To gabble Greek and Guzzle Wine!

Bless'd be young *Peel*, who gain'd the prize
At College, where they're all so wise!
Bless'd may he be from head to heel,
Red headed! Ready, Rhino Peel!

"DA CAPO."

COBBETT'S HUSBANDRY.

Leicester, 22 Jan. 1822.

RESPECTED FRIEND, WILLIAM
COBBETT.

IN the autumn of the year 1818, being in a bookseller's shop at Leicester, I happened to see the First Part of your "Year's Residence in America;" and on reading a page on the culture of Swedish Turnips, I was induced to buy the book; and very fortunate would it have been for me could I have had it six months sooner, as I should, no doubt, have drilled eighteen acres of turnips at four feet, and have had a good crop, whereas I sowed them broadcast; and had a very poor crop. However, I took home my book, highly delighted; and, I am sure, that I never read any agricultural work till then without disgust. I had often seen the name of Tull mentioned; but never, in any book, could I find enough information respecting his principles and practice, to enable me to adopt his system with any chance of success. What I wanted, I had now, however, in my possession; a new era in my existence, as a farmer, seemed to be formed, and I felt desirous

that some of my acquaintance should partake of the benefit, so I showed the book to a few of my friends; some thought there were some good things in it, others treated it as a romance: one, whose opinion was most favourable, was the very person that applied to the Farmer's Journalist for his opinion on the four feet system, and whom that Editor cautioned "not to believe all that Cobbett said:" now I know that very person had a most enormous crop of cabbages in 1819, planted and managed exactly in the manner recommended in your book—a very convincing proof of the correctness of the principles laid down in it. But this by the way: I fully determined to plant all my turnips, &c. at four feet the next summer; but however unaccountable it may seem, when the time came, I could not muster up resolution to put the system in practice beyond a few experiments in my garden, but ventured at $2\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 feet, the whole of my field turnips, cabbages and mangold wurzel, being planted at those distances; however, we went once with a plough in each space, and then again in a few days, or, perhaps, the same day, reversing the furrow, there not being room to form a ridge between; this had

a very good effect, and I had a most excellent crop of all the kinds; but, good as the crop was, I saw enough, by my small experiments, to convince me that it would have been much better at 4 feet, and that that system was the one which ought to be pursued, and which I adopted with my whole crop in 1820, except three acres of common turnips; and, I may observe, that just before the sowing of this crop, I received from my friend, an account of the decision of the Editor of the Farmer's Journal, which, however, *though from such high authority*, had not the least effect to alter my opinion and determination; and, had it not been for the neglect in not sowing a part early enough, and the misfortune of the fly taking another part, and the grub another, I should have had a most abundant crop; however, where they were sown early enough, and escaped the fly, &c. I had a most excellent crop; and, in one field of eight acres, I reversed the ridges in the spring, and drilled two rows, and, on some ridges, three rows, of Barley, on each ridge, in Tull's method, and managed it the same as I had done the turnips till near harvest, and though it was some time out in the wet, and a good deal wasted and

sprouted, yet it turned out six quarters per acre of clean corn, which is more than ever I grew on my land, if I except a small bit of the best of it. If I had wanted further proof of the excellency of this radical system of husbandry, as far as it relates to root crops, I had it last summer: a bit of ground, 1,080 yards square, which I sowed with mangel wurzel, at four feet, very late, and without manure, in 1820, and dug and forked well between the rows, produced in that year, 120 bushels of 80 pounds each; in 1821, without manure too, but early sown, it produced 220 bushels of 80 pounds; which latter crop is, I think, near 1,000 bushels per acre, and I do not doubt but it will produce as great a crop next year without manure, and perhaps for many years, true pains being always taken to pulverize it in the summer. On another piece of land I had the same or greater produce, but did not measure it; and on another piece of pretty good soil, but without any manure, since 1819 (and very little then) I had a crop of Swedes, at 4 four feet, of near 600 bushels of 80 pounds per acre. I have also cultivated potatoes on the same plan, only I allow them 5 feet; and though,

unfortunately, I did not ascertain exactly the produce, yet some persons who were averse to the wide system, confessed that the crop was greater than on a piece planted in rows 18 inches asunder, on land a great deal better; the latter crop was measured 400 bushels per acre.

I have intended for a long time to address a few lines to you, expressive of my gratitude for the valuable instruction contained in your "Year's Residence;" also to say how much I am indebted

(indeed the whole nation of honest men are indebted) to your other valuable writings, of which I am a constant reader and warm admirer.

I remain,

Your Friend,

J. S.

P. S.—I much approve of the intended Farmers' Meeting; it is a wise and patriotic scheme. No class of men are so much in the dark as the farmers; one great reason is, they have so much intercourse with the parsons.